

LABOUR MONTHLY

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Editor : R. Palme Dutt

AGAINST THE TORY OFFENSIVE:

- 1. What does Mr. Gaitskell offer?**
asks George Matthews
- 2. The miners fight back**
described by John Wood
- 3. The right to work**
is the key demand, says Herbert Howarth



Thaw or War?

That is the choice before us, writes R. Palme Dutt

Other Articles include

WAR OVER BERLIN ?

by Ivor Montagu

THE 21st CONGRESS

by Andrew Rothstein

And I WAS THERE, *by Norman Temple*

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WITH ANGER

WHEN TWICE within four weeks British miners tramp the pavements of London to protest against the policy leading to pit closures and unemployment, it calls up memories and anger. A terrible echo of twenty-five years ago: Welsh voices competing with the pitiless roar of traffic in the stony heart of the British Empire, as hungry singers shuffled along the gutter, far from home. In uplifting contrast, the chorus of Hunger Marchers, swinging down the valleys, across the Western counties to join up with the Scots, Tynesiders, Lancastrians, Yorkshiremen. Amongst them the flower of Britain's craftsmen, her finest 'hearts of oak' and 'daughters of Albion'. Today—and with what new worlds in view!—an angry Notts miner exclaims: 'What a lousy system we still slave under! Miners getting the sack and people shivering with the cold. Never have so many been taken in for so long by so few! I keep saying to myself that this is the last crisis capitalism will ever see'.

How to fight this offensive and meet it with the anger it deserves? Not without anger, too, at those

*For staying tame,
For lack of growth,
For overtime
And half a loaf.*

What do LABOUR MONTHLY readers think the way forward for the Left? I quote from three Scots, one an active Labour Party member, one a Communist and I don't know the political affiliation of the other: a young railwayman, a middle-aged teacher and a semi-invalid. The first from *Edinburgh* writes that hitherto too many have 'tamely submitted to corrupt policies which are having dire results for all. An event which aroused my anger and hatred more

than any other and convinced me that imperialistic policies were the order of the day, was the agreement by the then Labour Government letting the U.S. establish air bases here from which to attack the U.S.S.R. with nuclear weapons. The consequences of these policies, pursued alike by Labour and Conservative Governments, are visible to all. The way forward is for Labour's rank and file to acquire the determination to replace the present leaders by those whose first act will be to form a united front with the Communist Party and all other healthy elements, and reverse the present disastrous trends. Else we shall ultimately land in the nightmare of world war, which can only be avoided by unity within the labour movement and militant struggle. In L.M. problems confronting the socialist movement are subjected to scientific scrutiny and analysis, and practical measures outlined which, if acted upon by the rest of us, would in a comparatively short time lead to the victory of the labour movement here. I offer you my sincere thanks and profound respect'. The second, from the *West Coast* of Scotland, asks: Why speak of the Labour Party leadership retreating from socialism? 'Gaitskill and company never were socialists. Amongst the rank and file there has been a certain retreat, where honest members have been influenced by the pseudo-intellectual talk of leaders. Many, I fear, have been persuaded that there is some smart, slick and easy way to socialist ends, painless even to the capitalists. How to stop this retreat? By a genuine policy of opposition to Tory policies, that says socialism and means it.' He thinks the only body, *as a party*, determined to establish a socialist society is the Communist Party. 'Hence the hatred for it of capitalists, who know their real foes.

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NOTES OF THE MONTH

Thaw or War?

TWENTY years after. All the signs indicate that the coming months of this spring and summer, like the fateful spring and summer of 1939, will prove decisive months for the future of peace or war. Premier Macmillan's journey to Moscow, following on

the Mikoyan visit to the United States and the Dulles tour of the West European capitals, is itself only a preliminary step in a series of high-level diplomatic interchanges which have been announced from the Western side as planned to include a Foreign Ministers' Conference in the near future and possibly a Summit Conference. Many further contingencies, including the health of Mr. Dulles, may affect these plans. The situation is still in many respects unstable and fluid, corresponding to the unprecedented new relation of forces in the world. The battle of policy is visibly rising in the United States, while the tenure of office of the Macmillan Government in Britain may be approaching its close.

What then, of the prospect of war or peace? Can there be a thaw? It is clear that in the present tense international situation, with the sharpening and multiplication of issue of conflict in every region, and with the increasing deadliness

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in the range and power of new weapons, we are approaching the most critical moments of decision since 1945. The forces driving in the direction of war, and at the same time the extending array of forces on both sides striving to break the deadlock and end the tension, are simultaneously rising to a high point.

Beyond the Cold War?

The cold war is not eternal. The theory, sometimes offered as a 'consolation', that it can be eternal—that is, indefinitely prolonged in a continuous static unchanging world—is a dangerous illusion. It is as fatal as the corresponding illusion, widely preached before 1914, that the 'armed peace', as the situation was then described, could be indefinitely prolonged without war. Reflection of that illusion could be found in Brailsford's *War of Steel and Gold*. Peace was alleged by the ruling governments of the old 'Concert of Europe' to be based on reciprocal confrontation of armed strength or mutual deterrence. History exposed that fallacy. There is no 'peace through strength' in the world of imperialism. Still less in the world of nuclear weapons and rocket missiles.

Either—or

Once the armed confrontation exists, the diplomatic conflict in every field, and the rising tension, events can only lead to one of two types of outcome. Either the spark which lights the flame: the sudden explosion of open conflict in any one of a hundred fields, over any one of a hundred issues (Berlin; Iran; revolution; counter-revolution; armed plane incursions, etc.) spreading with the hair trigger speed of modern strategic calculations (for the Western powers have officially made clear that they will use nuclear weapons first whenever they think fit, even though the Soviet Union uses none, even in a limited conflict, and even though, as Mr. Macmillan's answer to the Greenwich women's letter has now made clear, there may be no Soviet armed aggression) to full-scale nuclear world war with incalculable consequences. That is the classic outcome of this type of situation to which all previous historical experience would point.

The Great Alternative

Or—this is the revolutionary new alternative—the conscious action of the governments on both sides, in view of the immeasurable universal menace of such an outcome, and through the pressure of the peoples in all countries, of the socialist peace initiative

and of the national liberation movement, to reverse the engines. To enter on serious negotiations, not for scoring points, not for maintaining inflexible positions, but to reach compromise settlements of equal partners in each concrete situation. To outlaw nuclear warfare and reduce armaments. To extend trade and exchange, and replace armed competition by peaceful competition in economic development. To recognise the existence of differing social systems in the present historical period; cease to disorganise world diplomacy by non-recognition where a régime is disapproved; and to dismantle the vast and costly machinery set up with the avowed aim of overthrowing any new revolutionary and socialist régime where the foreign bondholders have lost out. In short, to end the cold war.

A Revolutionary Programme

Such a programme, to be reached as the replacement of the present extreme international tension and menace, is contrary to all historical experience and precedent for the outcome of such situations. Every sceptic and greybeard wiseacre (not to mention some youthful sceptics, born prematurely old in the present diseased society) can shake a head over such a fantastic utopian conception. But then the cold war is without precedent. A man-made planet is without precedent. The whole modern world is without precedent. The Twenty-first Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union has set out revolutionary perspectives more breath-taking than any before. It has set out the near prospect of socialism, with centuries of handicap at the start, overtaking capitalism, not merely in the rate of advance, as it has already done, not merely in the ending of backwardness in the most deprived, formerly colonial oppressed and under-developed regions, not merely in the first fulfilment of civilised standards of equality of races and nations and colour and men and women, not merely in the highest scientific technical and educational levels yet known, but the near prospect of overtaking and leaving behind the most advanced minority sectors of capitalism absolutely and in all fields, and soaring forwards towards the new world of communism.

When the Idea Seizes the Masses

Yet it might be said that no less revolutionary in its implications is the parallel aim set forward at this Congress, as the counterpart of the building of communism, the aim of ending the cold war, not just as an aspiration, but as a serious and realisable aim. Certainly

this aim could not be set out with the same precise certainty and guarantee of fulfilment as the targets of the Seven Year Plan; for its fulfilment depends, not only on the Soviet people and the socialist world, but also on our action in the capitalist world. It is a bold and daring aim. But this aim has begun to win increasing support, not only from the masses of ordinary people everywhere, but also from many influential sections formerly committed to the cold war, including sometimes from the most unexpected quarters, as shown in the universal enthusiastic reception from all except the hard core of cold war fanatics in the State Department, Pentagon and right wing trade union bureaucracy, to Mikoyan's visit to the United States. To this degree the climate has begun to change. Such a reception would have been unthinkable ten, five, even two years ago. With unconcealed concern the Adenauers, the Lloyds and the Meanys desperately seek to pile on the ice to maintain the deep-freeze. The seed of the idea has begun to take root in the minds of countless hundreds of millions, in all countries, in all sections, high and low, irrespective of political affiliations, that the lives and future of the majority of those now existing on this earth depend on the speedy fulfilment of this supreme immediate aim—to end the cold war. From this all else can follow.

Macmillan in Moscow

Will Premier Macmillan's visit to Moscow contribute to this aim? Every contact is of use if it helps to prepare the way for a negotiated settlement. But it is impossible to neglect the warning of the previous experience of 1939. The Macmillan Mission to Moscow has been officially described as a 'reconnaissance' specifically without power to negotiate. It has been manifestly designed to appease public opinion desirous of peace; hence the controversy between the critics alleging an electoral manœuvre and the indignant denials of supporters insisting that any electoral advantage should be regarded as subsidiary to the diplomatic purpose. In these respects the Macmillan Mission to Moscow inevitably recalls the ill-fated Strang Mission to Moscow just twenty years ago which immediately preceded the war. The Strang Mission was also despatched without powers to negotiate, so that when the Soviet representatives put forward concrete military proposals to check Hitler's aggression and save Poland, the Mission could only reply that, although accompanied by a dummy military representative for show, they had no powers to discuss any concrete proposals. The Strang Mission was also designed to appease the public demand for British-

Soviet co-operation, but only with an empty show of willingness without serious intentions. While the infinitely protracted delays, evasions and impotence of the Strang Mission occupied the lime-light to distract public attention, the real policy, implicit in the unpublicised Hudson-Wohltat negotiations, of connivance at German remilitarisation and encouragement of Hitler's expansionist aims to the East at the expense of the Soviet Union was preparing the conditions for the second world war. If we draw the warning of this previous experience, it must be to prevent a similar outcome this time.

Dangerous Parallels

1939. 1959. Can we do better this time? Has the lesson been learned? There are disquieting parallels. There are also significant differences. Let us try to draw the balance.

The parallels are obvious. Once again the question of Germany, already the hotbed of two world wars, is the centre of the international situation. Once again dominant Western statesmen, in the blindness of their anti-Soviet hatred, have fawned upon the restored Nazis and militarists and Ruhr magnates, and press arms into their hands. Once again the proposal of co-operation with the Soviet Union for the preservation of peace, proposed by the Soviet leaders, demanded by Western public opinion, but so far rejected by the Western leaders, is the key to peace. So far the parallel is ominous.

'Never Again'

Who would have dared to predict in 1939 that within twenty years, after the deadly consequences of Munich had devastated the world in war, after the price for the destruction of German militarism and Nazism had cost many millions of Soviet lives and several hundred thousand British and American lives, after all the war-time pledges of 'Never Again' and solemn signed undertakings never to allow Germany to be rearmed anew, influential Western leaders should have so soon returned to their Munich vomit, and today at this moment even publicly threaten to let loose a new European war on behalf of the Munich-NATO alliance and West German militarism against the only part of Germany where Nazism, the Junkers, the monopolists and Hitler's generals have been cleared out? Ten thousand alternative prophecies along every conceivable and inconceivable line would have been thought more probable than that which has happened.

Raising the Stakes

This time the stakes are higher. It is the nuclear rearmament of German militarism that is now planned. If Hitler had had the H-bomb—! The Bonn régime already demands Hitler's 1937 frontiers. Through the Common Market the West German monopolists are restoring the economic framework of Hitler's Pan-Europe and drawing under domination France, Benelux and Italy. Hitler's general commands in Paris; Krupp resumes his empire; *The Times*, basking still in the glory of having been the first to propose the carve-up of Czechoslovakia to satisfy Hitler's annexationist aims, now twenty-one years later, sagely advises its readers not to worry if pledges are broken and the beast is once more out of the cage:

The whole Krupp heavy industrial empire may be virtually reintegrated, contrary to the 1953 deconcentration plan. . . . The former occupying Powers need not shed many tears. . . . Nothing much can be done about it . . . not appropriate to the Germany of 1959. . . . There is nothing to be gained by pressing too literally the terms of settlement which cannot be executed without hard feelings.

(*The Times*, January 30, 1959.)

No mention of Potsdam, Article 12:

German economy shall be decentralised for the purpose of eliminating the present excessive concentration of economic power as exemplified in particular by cartels, syndicates, trusts and other monopolistic arrangements.

Has Britain's signature disappeared from Potsdam? Or the Crimea Agreement? Or the Declaration of Europe? Or has the philosophy of the 'scrap of paper' now become so incorporated in the 'Western Way of Life' as to be regarded as no longer worthy of mention?

Towards a Different Outcome

But 1959 is not 1939. This is the elementary truth which all the war planners, the old Munichites still dominant in public life, the old public sycophants of Hitler in the Nazi press like Duncan Sandys, forget. The 21st Congress of the Soviet Communist Party and its Seven Year Plan could never have been conceivable in 1939. The balance of the world has changed for ever. The New World is outstripping the old. The impact of this transformation, advancing every month, has been shown in every country, and not least in the new currents and controversies over policy in the United States. It has been shown in the public pressure which has driven Macmillan to Moscow. The anger of the peoples against the nuclear war planners rises daily. This is the situation which is

bringing within grasp the possibility that, despite the renewed sharpness of the war danger, the battle for peace can be won. Through the crucial diplomatic interchanges due to take place during these coming months the active mobilisation and participation of the peoples in all countries can ensure that the first steps are achieved towards peaceful negotiation and at any rate the beginning of peaceful co-existence. This theme of peace was the central international theme of the 21st Congress, alongside the building of communism. This theme of peace will be equally the central theme of the coming 26th Congress of the Communist Party in this country, alongside and inseparably united with, the battle to combat the slump and to defeat Toryism.

Voices of War

The gravity of the facts of the present situation needs to be faced. There is no lack of voices of war in high places in the West. The last testimony of Dulles, in his private report to Congress on the eve of his European tour, published at its conclusion, advocated the policy of 'risking a war'. General Norstad at NATO headquarters has proclaimed his plans for action with armoured columns. Dr. Kissinger, in his interview to the West German *Spiegel*, has declared himself 'in favour of giving the Russians an ultimatum and, if necessary, conducting a total war' with the combined armed strength of America and West Germany going it alone, in the event of Britain and France staying out. All the American Army and Air Chiefs have given official evidence to the Senate opposing any agreement for suspension of nuclear tests as fatal to the interests of the United States (thus giving the lie to the endless succession of factitious technical objections put forward as a façade for obstruction by the American representatives at Geneva), with the resulting conclusion drawn by *The Times* that these views of the American Service chiefs seem 'calculated to tip the scales against Washington's ostensible hopes for agreement at Geneva'. It is clear that the fight for peace, even for the most modest initial step of a suspension of nuclear tests, officially included in Labour's programme, is at present endangered precisely because of the hopes and too easy optimism aroused through the new interchanges and conferences, and will need a very considerable raising of the present level of campaigning to stand a chance of winning.

Song of Death

As a macabre serio-comic accompaniment of the above official declarations of the leading representatives of Western humanitarian

civilisation in favour of total nuclear war, we may quote the special little personal death-song of Lord Birdwood in the House of Lords debate on nuclear weapons on February 11, in which he expressed the conventional sentiment which has nowadays become the standard cliché of the Western upper class:

I would rather contemplate a world in which there was nothing left to rescue than live on in a world which had been absorbed into a system of life which I abhor. I do not wish to continue to live on in such a world. I would sooner be destroyed.

The noble baron can of course speak for himself. But he cannot speak for humanity. His intelligence has failed to keep up with his fanaticism. He has missed the whole point of the controversy on nuclear weapons. No one would dispute his right to dispose of himself, if he so wishes, as a testimony to this counter-revolutionary zeal. But he has no right to propose to destroy hundreds of millions of other human beings as a testimony to his personal beliefs.

Homicidal Mania

It is possible that the fame of Lord Birdwood has not yet reached 99.9 per cent of the human race. Hence the disappearance of Lord Birdwood might not be likely to cause loud lamentations circling round the earth. But if they were to learn that he proposes to destroy them all because he disapproves of them, they might be pardonably annoyed. The theory expressed in this familiar cliché of Lord Birdwood and every archbishop and Conservative journal defending nuclear weapons ('I would rather be destroyed than live in a communist world') is that if, for the sake of argument, 99 per cent of humanity were to choose communism, but Lord Birdwood and 1 per cent were to disapprove, then the 1 per cent should have the right to destroy the 99 per cent, and themselves into the bargain, in order to bring life on earth to an end and thus check a system they 'abhor'. This is not 'heroism' of a dying class. It is just plain homicidal mania.

Logic of Death

The insane logic of this conception continues to be officially enshrined in the latest 'Defence' White Paper and the accompanying remarks of Mr. Sandys in the parliamentary debate on February 11. It is now universally recognised that the United States has no inter-continental missile in operation to counter the Soviet inter-continental missile, and is unlikely to have for two years, and is therefore entirely dependent, for purposes of war, on using its

doubtfully effective intermediate missiles from such countries, Britain, France, Spain and Turkey, as have been foolish enough to accept American rocket sites. Hence the official strategy of the Atlantic Alliance is now that, in the event of Atlantic-Soviet war, Britain is to be the victim plainly marked for destruction as the devoted sacrificial lamb of Western civilisation—in the illusory belief that the United States, and all the V.I.P.s who have moved there or to Canada to continue indomitably the struggle, will escape. The bold Mr. Woodrow Wyatt has even conceived the lofty ambition (*Reynolds News*, 15.1.59) that this situation should be used by Britain for a little blackmail to secure 'a substantial financial contribution from America'—a kind of 'danger money' for the poor guinea pig. Mr. Sandys has the task to persuade his fellow Lemmings to immolate themselves.

Destroying the Last Excuses

Two tiny grains of poisoned sugar used to be offered to the British Lemmings to sweeten the pill. Both have now been withdrawn. The first was to suggest that nuclear war might not necessarily be total war destroying Britain; there were now invented 'tactical' nuclear weapons, little toys hardly more destructive than the atom bombs of Hiroshima and Nagasaki; with these a 'limited' nuclear war could be conducted, killing only a few million foreigners, and leaving Britain roughly intact. The illusion of the argument was always obvious; the million victims would hardly pause to enquire whether it was a 'tactical' or 'strategic' bomb that had hit them; the hornets' nest would still be the main target for destruction. But now Mr. Sandys has abandoned the distinction. 'There is no way of drawing a line', he said in the debate, 'between what is a tactical and what is a strategic weapon. I would not distinguish between the two classes of weapons.' Exit the fairy tale of 'limited war'.

What is 'Aggression'?

The other grain of sugar for the British Lemmings was the assurance that this suicidal weapon was really only a 'deterrent'; it would never be used, except in the extreme emergency to counter the aggression of Soviet hordes attacking to sweep over Western Europe; the possession of the weapon prevented such an assault; hence Britain was safe. This fairy tale was translated in the poetic fancy of Mr. Strachey into his favourite metaphor of the 'bee's sting'; Britain's H-bomb was like the sting of the bee; its use would

kill the bee; but its possession saves the bee. Mr. Sandys duly demolished this fairy tale also. NATO headquarters and the Western Powers have always refused to define the 'aggression' which they would regard as a justification for nuclear war. They have always included 'indirect aggression', that is, situations in which there is no armed invasion of a country. Pressed on this question in the parliamentary debate, to define the conditions which would lead to the deadly decision to initiate nuclear war, Mr. Sandys refused, and insisted that this key question for the future of Britain must be a State secret. 'It is not a matter that should be discussed in public.' Thus the most important question for the future existence or destruction of the British people must not come before the electorate.

Vanished Illusions of Superiority

To maintain this crazy fabric of suicidal insanity, Mr. Sandys has still to try to cling to the most exploded myth of all; the myth of Western nuclear superiority. 'There can be no doubt', he said, with as brazen a face as he could muster, 'that the West still possesses indisputable superiority in nuclear hitting power.' He can discuss that with the Congress Armed Services Committees, or with the evidence of the American Service Chiefs, whose main present controversy is as to whether the United States is 1½, 2 or 3 years behind and how long it would take, if ever, to catch up. Or he might study with advantage the report of Marshal Malinovsky to the 21st Congress, when he set out very plain facts without concealment, that the Soviet Union has now the means to hit any target in the United States with pinpoint accuracy. The development of the cosmic rockets has sufficiently demonstrated the truth of this.

Exploded Myths of Aggression

But what conclusion follows from this? That the Soviet Union, with admitted nuclear and rocket superiority at present, can now launch an invincible attack on the West to ensure world domination? This should evidently be the conclusion according to the entire Western propaganda picture of the Soviet Union which has been spread for the past dozen years and made the basis of NATO strategy. But the Soviet people obstinately refuse to conform to the Western propaganda picture. Instead, they redouble their demands for outlawing all nuclear weapons and missile rockets; for peaceful co-existence; and for international co-operation in rocket development and the exploration of outer space.

Logic of Peace

Thus the two main pillars of the entire Atlantic strategy have now collapsed. The first was the assumption of western nuclear monopoly or superiority enabling the Anglo-American Alliance to dictate terms to the Soviet Union and the rest of the world. That is finished. The second was the assumption of the threatening Soviet armed attack on the West, in the name of which all the vast structure of rearmament and NATO was built. Now that also is finished. What remains? The supposed basis for NATO has gone. When *The Times* on February 2 announced the Cyprus Plan, its political commentator explained that any base on the island must be a British and not a NATO base, because 'NATO might be wound up at some future date'. An interesting incidental remark. Coming events cast their shadows. But the time for winding up, and advancing to real European co-operation is now. It is time to banish the unseemly nightmares and enter the far more interesting world of living reality. There is no Western superiority. There is no threat of Soviet attack. What remains? Nothing but the only path forward—the path of peaceful co-operation and peaceful co-existence.

Voices of Sanity

There is therefore no occasion for surprise that more and more voices, from widely dispersed sections, are now beginning to sound both in the United States and in Britain for a change of policy from the whole programme of the cold war. Earl Russell is only one of the most conspicuous examples of conversion from advocacy of a third world war to conquer the Soviet Union, so long as the United States appeared to have nuclear superiority, to his present eloquent advocacy, as soon as it became clear that the Soviet Union had nuclear equality, of peaceful co-existence and the banning of all nuclear weapons and wars. When Eleanor Roosevelt and over thirty famous co-signatories published their Manifesto in the *New York Times* on October 16, 1958, under the heading 'America Needs a New Foreign Policy' and declaring:

For twelve years the United States, under administrations of both political parties, has followed a policy of cold war. This policy has carried us time and again to the edge of disaster. . . .

It is time we faced reality. . . . The peoples of the world must either live together or die together. . . .

Therefore we urge that the Government and the people of the United States, through every possible means, enter into a discussion and a reconsideration of our entire foreign policy.

This was a sign of the times. The Democratic landslide in the elections revealed the anger with the Republican cold war policy of Dulles and Lodge, just as the previous Republican landslide in 1952 reflected the hostility to the Democratic policy of the Korean war and the response to Eisenhower's pledge to end it. The new Democratic leaders in Congress, former ardent advocates of the cold war, have begun to express criticism of the existing policy and demand a complete review of foreign policy. In Britain the controversy over Macmillan's visit to Moscow has revealed that, equally in the opinion of critics and supporters, it is the most popular thing a British Premier could do.

General Election and Peace

Some Labour spokesmen and other critics have alleged that the Macmillan visit to Moscow must be regarded as an election manoeuvre. His stock was falling; the newspaper polls were swinging against him; unemployment and justified anger of the people against Toryism was rising. So the brilliant inspiration to use again the well tried method of 1951 (Churchill's Edinburgh speech for a Summit Conference) and 1955 (Eden on the eve of the Summit Conference). Indignantly *The Times* repudiated the outrageous suggestion that a British Prime Minister could think of grave issues of foreign policy in terms of electoral advantage, but at the same time coyly admitted that

Mr. Macmillan and his party might benefit at the polls as the incidental by-product of a more or less successful ascent to the summit with Mr. Khrushchov (that is quite likely).

And so after all the view of the electoral benefit of a visit to Moscow is common to both sides of the controversy. Outrageous? Shades of the Khaki election! Or the 'Hang the Kaiser' Election. Or 1935 (Hoare's steadfast adhesion to collective security). Not to mention 1951 and 1955.

From Show to Practice

There is more here involved than electoral slickness. Through all the fair words we shall do well to remember the indication of the mind of the ruling class conveyed only last December by the former British Ambassador to Moscow:

Summit Conferences are at present a waste of time . . . though it may be necessary to go through the movements to keep the wishful thinkers from rocking the boat excessively.

(Sir David Kelly, *Sunday Times*, 19.12.58.)

'Necessary to go through the movements.' Once again, also through this characteristic cynical observation, the same universal recognition is revealed that what is popular, what the people really desire, is peaceful co-existence, an end of the cold war, British-Soviet friendship and co-operation. Let us hold fast to this main truth. Our essential concern in this matter of British-Soviet or East-West negotiation is neither to spend our time on exposing the electoral manœuvres of our adversaries, nor to trust them. Our essential concern is to see that the popular movement takes over the initiative, both before, during and after the election, for concrete measures to promote peaceful negotiation, the banning of nuclear weapons and peaceful co-existence.

Mr. Gaitskell's Grave Responsibility

But where does the Labour Party come into this picture? Here is the most serious aspect of the whole situation. What is the use of complaining that the astute Mr. Macmillan has stolen a march and pulled off an electoral manœuvre? The real question is: *Who gave him the opportunity?* A chess player can hardly complain that his wicked opponent has seized his queen for nothing if he has left his queen undefended. The answer is inescapable and known to all. It is Mr. Gaitskell who, with a magnificent opportunity open before the Labour Party, has deliberately handed over the initiative in promoting British-Soviet relations to Mr. Macmillan in order to prove his own dog-like devotion to the cold war. Just as the success of the Soviet leaders' visit to Britain was only marred by the Labour Party Executive's dinner, so Mr. Gaitskell and his friends have been at it again. Mr. Gaitskell was invited to the Soviet Union last autumn. The ball was at his feet. Had he gone, the Tory Premier's visit would have only looked like a belated imitation of the Labour Party's initiative. Mr. Gaitskell was invited to Poland. Each time he found it not convenient to go. But he found it convenient to visit General de Gaulle, the hero of the military coup against democracy in France, and sing his praises. He found it convenient to visit Adenauer's West Germany and make speeches advocating an airlift as his little contribution to international understanding. Mr. Gaitskell has shown a remarkable ability, unequalled by any previously known party leader of any party, for always kicking into his own goal. Tory headquarters should confer a gold medal on Mr. Gaitskell as their greatest asset and hope in an election which otherwise bids fair to swamp them.

Cold War Diehards

Do the dominant leaders of the official labour movement in Britain and the United States really wish to stamp their 'image' (in the current fashionable phrase) on the minds of the general public and electorate as the most rigid inflexible cold war warriors alongside the Pentagon and NATO brasshats? This picture certainly aroused general remark during the Mikoyan visit to the United States, when Mr. Meany at the head of the A.F.L.-C.I.O. refused even to meet Mr. Mikoyan, and Vice-President Nixon proclaimed his

admiration that the most vigorous critics of Communism and the most uncompromising supporters of our firm stand in Berlin were not the Wall Street bankers and businessmen, but the leaders of our (*sic*) free trade unions. . . . I would respectfully suggest that some of them (the businessmen) could learn a lesson from our (*sic*) labour leaders.

Similarly Labour's right-wing organ, *Forward*, editorially complained of the ovations to Mikoyan, that American public opinion was 'swinging much too far the other way', *i.e.*, against the cold war. Certainly those whose professional stock in trade is anti-communism view with alarm the possibility of loss of their basis, whereas many sections of businessmen may be looking with interest to the possibilities of increased trade and easier world conditions. The Butler is always more zealous in his Master's cause than the Master. But to put it no higher, if the Labour Party leaders wish to win the election, they would do well to present a serious policy for peace, rather than lay all their emphasis on their implacable anti-communist, anti-Soviet hatred, leaving the smiles and blandishments and peaceful professions for the Tories.

Stirrings in the Labour Party

It is therefore a favourable sign that at least a considerable minority section of Labour back-benchers (apparently no front bench initiative whatever at the outset for such a manifestly important step) did draw up a motion to present concrete proposals for a peaceful solution in Europe, including recognition of the German Democratic Republic, as one of the obviously necessary conditions if there is to be negotiation. At once prominent front bench leaders and the right-wing presented a counter-amendment on standard cold war lines. According to the reports in the press, the signatures at the last stage before the amalgamation showed 48 for the left-wing resolution and 113 for the right-wing amendment. A reconciliation then produced a united resolution along the lines of last year's Conference decisions.

Towards a Labour Programme for Peace

This united resolution has the advantage of at least suggesting an approach to disengagement, partial withdrawal of troops, and possible withdrawal of a united Germany from military alliances. But this line fails to touch the problems of the present position. In place of the Rapacki Plan it offers the fatal weaknesses of the Gaitskell Plan, which proposes the withdrawal of Western troops only from Western Germany, but of Soviet troops from all Eastern Europe, thus in effect proposing the dismantling of the Warsaw Pact while insisting that NATO must be retained. Why not propose the dismantling of both Pacts to be replaced by a European Security Treaty? Why not propose the withdrawal, as offered by the Soviet Union, of all foreign occupying troops? If the Labour Party could enter the election with a plain programme for peace, for ending the cold war, for banning nuclear weapons and straight-way freeing Britain from the H-bomb and rocket sites, for terminating NATO and the Warsaw Pact and foreign occupation and colonial wars, for removing the bans on trade, for peaceful co-existence, there is no doubt that such a programme, backed with the full campaigning enthusiasm of the labour movement, could sweep the country.

Economic Crisis, Peace and the Election

Such a programme for peace is the more important now, precisely because the menacing advance of unemployment, economic insecurity and hardship is today overshadowing the lives of the people of this country and will dominate the election. The 620,000 registered unemployed in January is almost officially admitted to represent over one million. All the chickens are now coming home to roost from the piecrust promises of the reformist leaders about the 'new capitalism' and 'permanent full employment' and the 'abolition of poverty' and 'Britain's classless revolution'. The class war is here and open: nowhere more plain and open than in the new Engineering Employers' Memorandum which now confirms everything that the Communists and militant shop stewards said at the time about the true face and policy of Britain's capitalist class. The cold war policy, rearmament inflation and economic deprivation and decline at home are all closely united.

No Automatic Victory

There could be no greater illusion than to suppose that unemployment and economic misery will bring an automatic Labour victory.

Remember the Hungry Thirties. The unceasing mass unemployment. The hunger marches. Yet the only two elections during the Hungry Thirties both produced Tory victories. Why? Because the militant fight of the masses of the labour movement, of the hunger marches, of the defeat of Mosley, of the battle for Spain, met with no reflection or support from the official Labour leadership, but only angry hostility and bans and expulsions, alongside nauseating tributes to Chamberlain and Toryism. Let us remember the warning and act on it. If Toryism is to be defeated, if a fighting labour movement is to win the election and bring a real change in British politics, this can only be done on the basis of a programme which answers the needs of the people; which puts forward a policy to end the cold war and nuclear nightmares and win peace; and which puts forwards a policy to combat the slump and win improved conditions and enter on the essential socialist reconstruction whose delay is throwing Britain into backwardness.

Co-operation for Victory

It is towards such a programme that the coming Communist Congress at Easter will seek to make its contribution. All those in the trade unions and the Labour Party who are seeking the path forward will do well to consider and study the policy there expressed; for it will in plain fact be the only policy of any party (all the more now, after the conspicuous breakdown and irrelevance of the 'glossy' in face of the crisis) which presents a concrete programme of measures to combat the slump and to win peace. They will do well to study it without prejudice and without presuppositions, for what its contents are worth; just as Communists need to study and take into careful consideration all policies and proposals put forward from other sections of the Left, from all sections of the trade union and labour movement who are seeking the path of advance. For only from such co-operation will the future victory be won.

February 18, 1959

R.P.D.

PAST CONTENTS

JANUARY: *Outlook for 1959* (R.P.D.); *Robert Burns* (William Gallacher); *New Trade Policies for Old* (John Eaton); *Seven Year Plan* (Andrew Rothstein); *Why I Joined* (Councillor Hilda Lane); *Background to Berlin* (Gordon Schaffer); *My Experiences in a Chinese Commune* (David Crook). BOOK REVIEWS: *Noveishaya Istoriya Anglii* (V. G. Trukhanovsky); *Torture Trial in Belfast* (John Hostettler); reviewed by Clemens Dutt, D. N. Pritt, Q.C.

FEBRUARY: *Election Prospects* (R.P.D.); *Suicide Club* (Ivor Montagu); *A Memoir of G. D. H. Cole* (R. Page Arnot); *Shop Stewards Today* (Bill Warman); *Convertibility and After* (J. R. Campbell); *Africa Awakened* (W. E. B. Du Bois); *Charles Darwin* (Clemens Dutt); *The Choice for the Sudan* (A. Masri); *Farewell to the Commune* (David Crook).

THE TORY OFFENSIVE

I. *What does Mr. Gaitskell offer?*

George Matthews

THE Supremacy myth is crashing in ruins. Not all the wiles of the advertising agencies, the shouts of the Tory press, the brief descents on Northern pubs from the nearest luxury hotel, or the fireside chats on T.V. can conceal from the eye or push out of the mind those 620,786 unemployed.

Not even the trip to Moscow, the statutory genuflection to public demand for peace made by every Tory Prime Minister before a General Election, can rehabilitate Macmillan. Yet he still hopes to scrape through when the Election comes. True, the public opinion polls put Labour ahead of the Tories. But it is only just ahead—and not because of a swing to Labour, but because of the falling-off in Tory support.

Why does Macmillan still have hopes? Because Labour has still not convinced the electorate that it has a real alternative to Tory economic policy.

How could Labour guarantee an overwhelming victory in the General Election? First and foremost, by showing that its policy would fight the slump and safeguard employment. It is not too much to say that even an expert in economics—let alone the man in the street—would be hard put to it to detect any major difference between Mr. Gaitskell's economic policy and that of Mr. Macmillan. Only the other day the *Observer* Political Correspondent was commenting:

The two parties are now so close to one another that a famous Tory argued the other day that the next election would turn on two letters of the alphabet. The Tories would be accused of *deflation* and the Labour Party of *inflation*.

(February 2, 1959.)

But it is doubtful if even this distinction is valid. Is Mr. Gaitskell for an 'inflationary policy'? It is but a few weeks since he and his colleagues were denouncing the Government for allegedly making it possible for the people to consume more. The Tories were attacked for encouraging a 'spending spree'—because they got the breeze up lest the slump should go too far, and relaxed hire purchase restrictions a little. Popularly 'inflation' is understood to

be 'too much money chasing too few goods'. Would the people have 'too much money' if a Labour Government was returned? It seems hardly likely, judging from what the Labour leaders say about wages. In innumerable speeches, articles and T.V. interviews they have claimed that if returned to office they would be more effective than the Tories in getting the trade unions to exercise 'restraint' in putting wage demands.

On wages the only difference between Labour and the Tories is that the Tories tell the bosses not to give increased wages, and Labour tells the trade unions not to ask for increased wages. Either way the workers don't get more money in the pay packet.

What about convertibility? When the announcement was made at Christmas time about the £ being made convertible as far as non-sterling-area holders of sterling are concerned, Mr. Gaitskell with unusual promptitude issued a statement denouncing the step. Was he, for once, going to fight the Tories? Alas, within a few days he was telling the world that if a Labour Government was returned it would not reverse this Tory measure.

In the convertibility debate in Parliament on January 28 he spent nearly an hour explaining how bad convertibility was, and how it would make the economy more vulnerable. Then, having thus described how the Tories had set the economy on a course which was more or less certain to lead to a crash, he said that though Labour disagreed with the decision 'we should have to do our best to work it'. This is as much to say: 'You Tories are strangling Britain, but we won't loosen the noose when we get in'. In this speech also Mr. Gaitskell went out of his way to express 'some sympathy' with Mr. Keswick, Bank of England director, who wrote the famous letter about selling sterling securities being 'anti-British and derogatory to sterling', but added 'on balance, if one is free to do so, it makes sense to me'. The real blame, said Mr. Gaitskell, rests not on Mr. Keswick, but on the Government. Of course the capitalist Government is to blame: but why sympathise with the capitalists who support it and whose instrument it is, instead of exposing their utter lack of patriotism and rousing the working people to action against them?

Take another issue of tremendous concern to a key section of British workers—the coalfield closures. In Scotland, Wales and elsewhere the greatest movement for years has developed as the miners realise the threat to their future resulting from the policy of the Coal Board and the Government. Mr. Gaitskell went to Wales to 'meet the people' early in January. What did he tell the miners?

I think the matter has been well-handled by the Coal Board and the miners' union. Replacement of coal by oil makes closings inevitable. Nobody seriously says that pits must remain open producing coal at a loss.

(*Daily Express*, January 10, 1959.)

So Mr. Gaitskell says: Convertibility is bad but we will not reverse it. Pit closures are sad, but we will not stop them. Is this the programme on which Labour is to fight the election?

It may be argued that this is too harsh a description of Labour policy. These are statements on specific issues. There is more to Labour's policy than that. Is there? Here is what the famous glossy pamphlet says on safeguarding jobs:

The first objective of the Labour government will be to *restore* full employment and to *preserve* full employment. This is the prime purpose of our plan for controlled expansion. Where local pockets of unemployment persist, we shall steer jobs to the workers, as we did in the development areas in 1945-51.

That is all. That is literally all. It then goes straight on to talk of the need for 'good working conditions' to be realised by a 'Code of Industrial Conduct'.

If the proposal was that the first point of such a code should be 'Thou shalt not sack a single worker until he is found alternative work' there might be something to be said for it!

In a period when capitalist slump is developing, is it an answer to talk about 'steering jobs' to 'local pockets of unemployment' as at the height of the post-war reconstruction boom in 1945-51? Suppose the crisis worsens and there is no 'spare' work to be 'steered' into the worst-hit areas? Suppose not only West Wales, Lancashire, Northern Ireland and Scotland, not only steel, coal and textiles are badly hit, but every area and all industries? Suppose the big monopolists, not only won't go to the 'depressed areas' but even cut down production in the relatively prosperous areas?

What will Labour do then? Ah, it will no doubt be said, but the 'glossy' is only a potted, simplified version of Mr. Gaitskell's policy. He has far more up his sleeve than that. Remember *Plan for Progress*, the policy document produced before the Labour Party Conference. But that is just the trouble. The glossy is a fair summary of *Plan for Progress*. If there is nothing in the glossy it is because boiling down nothing produces . . . nothing. All that *Plan for Progress* contained was a mass of generalities about 'expansion'—as if it was only necessary to pronounce the magic incantation 'expand' to a slumping capitalist economy, and immediately all the contradictions of capitalism would be solved.

The fact is that because the slump is the product of capitalism, only a policy which interferes with the 'natural' workings of the capitalist system, which attacks the strongholds of monopoly and brings the working class into battle can combat it. Struggle against the slump is class struggle. As long as Labour's policy is based on the idea of making 'welfare capitalism work more efficiently and equitably than the Tories' (as the *New Statesman* summed up the policy decided on at last year's Labour Party Conference) it will neither prevent the growth of unemployment nor convince the electorate that Labour offers a real alternative policy to that of the Tories.

When *Plan for Progress* says 'The strength of the £ will be the first priority of our external economic policy' it is not talking of the £ in the worker's pay packet, but the £ of British imperialism. But to continue imperialist policies, to support the huge burden of 'defence' expenditure (which is designed not to defend Britain or its people but to defend British imperialism's profits), to refuse to break with the disastrous American war alliance, inevitably prevents a progressive home policy from being worked out and put forward.

A reactionary external policy means a reactionary home policy. Surely this is one of the principal lessons of the 1945-51 period, and it is time it was learnt. But if imperialist policies were ended and there was a readiness to stand up to the big monopolies, war expenditure could be drastically cut, a big programme of technical development carried through in Britain, capital investment stimulated and trade (especially East-West trade) increased.

The Communist Party has suggested an eight-point plan to fight the slump: (1) Stop sackings; (2) higher wages and pensions; (3) shorter hours; (4) more building; (5) improving nationalised industries; (6) more overseas trade; (7) an extension of nationalisation; (8) less money for war, more for peaceful construction. If Mr. Gaitskell put forward such a policy no one would have any difficulty at all in seeing the difference between him and Mr. Macmillan. The issue of the election would not turn on two letters of the alphabet. It would be clear to all that to vote for the Tories would mean unemployment, while to vote for Labour would mean a fight for full employment. Some of the £725,000 Mr. Morgan Phillips is wanting might have to be spent on a new pamphlet in place of *The Future Labour Offers You*. But if Labour got out twenty million leaflets (even if they were on coarse newsprint instead of the finest glossy paper), headed them *Labour Offers You Jobs* and showed

concretely how capitalist slump was going to be fought, it would not need £725,000 to win the election.

It would knock Macmillan so hard into the middle of next week that he would join the ranks of permanently unemployed Tory ex-Prime Ministers.

2. The Miners Fight Back

John Wood

IT is heartening to see how the workers are moving against the Tory offensive on their living conditions, in many instances in spite of the lack of real fight and leadership by officials in the labour and trade union movement. We have seen the struggle by workers in engineering, motors and London busmen, which has given the lie to the often repeated phrase of the right-wing leadership that young workers are not politically or industrially conscious. Today the limelight is on the miners and their fight back against pit closures.

When the proposal to close thirty-six pits in Britain as 'uneconomic' was announced by the National Coal Board, it came as a shock to the mining communities, but not a 'shock of paralysis'. Rather the opposite. The two worst hit areas, namely, Scotland and South Wales, have seen a resurgence of united mass demonstrations not witnessed since the nineteen twenties and nineteen thirties. Especially significant is the active participation of youth in the coalfields against these threats of closures and unemployment.

In Scotland these ever-growing demonstrations are bringing into activity not only miners but all sections of the community. The problem being correctly analysed as the result of Tory Government policy, they see this as one which can have disastrous effects on all classes. Thus the platforms in Scotland are of the broadest form of unity: miners, craftsmen in the mining industry, trades councils, Protestant and Catholic clergy, members of Parliament and of local authorities.

A similar picture can be drawn in South Wales, whence 700 miners came to Westminster on a mass lobby of Parliament on January 29, after local demonstrations of whole communities.

When the Scottish Area of the N.U.M. decided to call for a mass demonstration and lobby of the National Coal Board and at the House of Commons, along with the Special National Coalfield Con-

ference, support was expressed by all sections with remarkable breadth of representation.

Whilst these demonstrations for the right to live and work have been in progress, it is a fact of utmost importance that miners in districts not so threatened have been calling for a closing of the ranks, and to participate in the campaign. The clear political lesson can be drawn; no bans or proscriptions, but a real working-class approach of an injury to one is an injury to all. Miners and others have been quick to see that an unemployed army will be used by Tory Government and employers against their hard-won wages and conditions.

They see, too, the brutal and callous approach of the National Coal Board in their treatment of the miners of 65 and upwards in the closing pits, who are to be discarded with six months' redundancy pay. They compare this with a retirement pension of approximately £1,000 per year for members of the National Coal Board; here again is the brutality of the system of society which these people are prepared to serve.

Again, they see many miners suffering from that accursed and hellish disease of pneumoconiosis, at present with some kind of job in the industry which allows them to live, being discarded like old boots in the pits scheduled for closures.

What chance has such an industry to attract youth to it?

This policy will make our basic industry in Britain a dying industry. We cannot allow this to happen. Hence this campaign must be raised higher yet.

What is required is to bring the weight of all these forces against the policy of the Tory government. This means throwing off the shackles which the right-wing leadership attempts to impose: that it is wrong to use industrial means for political ends. The Tories see their job of attacking the workers in a clearer light: they are using political means for attacks in the industrial field. Firstly, we must see clearly that arising out of the report of the Cohen Committee, allied to a contracting capitalist world market and the crisis in world capitalism, the Tory government has led Britain into a policy of industrial stagnation.

Britain's economy was and still is based on heavy industry. But steel production in 1958 was twenty-one per cent below 1957. A drop in steel production means less demand for coal and coke: that now in turn means unemployment and short time working. But while the capitalist world market is contracting there is in the

world an ever developing socialist market. American trade shackles must be broken. If the U.S.S.R., China and the other socialist countries wish us to build whole factories for them, this will mean work, food, clothes and homes for us as workers.

Coming back to the miners, it is about time the general public understood that the coal mining industry has made a profit every year since 1948. Losses result from payment of compensation to the former coal owners, who handed over a semi-derelict industry to the Labour Government in 1947. This is still being paid to former owners of all pits which have been closed, either through exhaustion or as 'uneconomic', since vesting date. The money saved by withdrawing at least these compensation payments could be used to cheapen the price of coal in the real interest of the people. (Of course coal distribution must be nationalised also.) Meanwhile, big industry should be made to pay a realistic price for coal, instead of getting it, as at present, at 10s. to 20s. per ton below the actual cost of production. The increased revenues would provide higher wages, shorter working hours, increased holiday and improved pensions and sickness benefits for the miners. These improvements would give incentive to youth to come into the mining industry and carry forward the new mechanisation schemes which must take the place of the hard and arduous manual labour.

All these steps would increase purchasing power of all other sections in the community. Just as the present fight against pit closures is not just a miners' struggle, then the solution to the problem will not be simply a solution for the miners.

This can lay the basis for new industry in Britain and usher in a new technical age. But to realise these great opportunities there must be a clear understanding that this Tory government must be fought. It must be forced to come to the country. Tory policy has proved bankrupt for the mass of the people. This Tory government must be defeated; and it must be replaced by a Labour government which has accepted a policy leading to industrial expansion and mutual trading agreement with the socialist sector of the world. But at present the Tories are being assisted in their attacks upon the working class by the failure of the right-wing leadership of the Trades Union Congress and the Labour Party to mobilise the workers who are demonstrating this new awakening militant spirit.

It is when one is alive that one fights for breath: so it is when one is in employment that one must fight against unemployment. The Trades Union Congress and the Labour Party must be gal-

vanised into action against the bankrupt policy of the Tory government. If the miners can organise such wide mass demonstrations, there is nothing to stop the T.U.C. and Labour Party bringing to London 100,000 of a demonstration—yes, and more—if they would remove from their mind the mist of opportunism.

Let the other sections of the movement take heed of the lessons provided by the struggle of the workers over the last three years and realise that if these lessons were learnt, there could be developed such a movement as to make sure the Tories will not only be soundly defeated at the General Election, but that they will never again be the government of this country.

3. The Right to Work

**Herbert Howarth*

THERE can be no doubts now in the mind of any intelligent person that an important change has taken place in the climate of world economy. On the one hand, in the countries of eastern Europe, the Soviet Union and China, the prospects of limitless industrial expansion, leading to shorter hours of labour and higher cultural and living standards. On the other, a creeping paralysis of the economy of the 'free' world, which, it is becoming increasingly clear is a euphemism for 'free-for-all and devil take the hindmost'. As I write, the press report 4,600,000 unemployed in the United States; 1,300,000 in the 'European miracle', Western Germany, and 620,000 in Great Britain. Every capitalist country admits to creating post-war records—in unemployment.

Four years ago, the Tories proclaimed the aim of doubling the standard of life in twenty-five years. How hollow and cheap such boasts sound now! The development of this situation (long foretold by all knowledgeable Socialists and Communists) is rousing in the working class of Britain all their magnificent fighting instincts; instincts that the ruling class and right-wing leaders of social-democracy fondly hoped had been consigned to limbo.

While this new situation has come as an unwelcome shock to many in the movement, the best elements were already learning the lessons, warning the movement and preparing the workers to fight, as far back as 1956. The 1957 National Committee of the Amalgamated Engineering Union put forward a clear lead with

**Mr. Howarth, as many of our readers will know, is a leading Sheffield engineer.—Ed., L.M.*

its now famous Resolution 15 on Redundancy which reads as follows:

This National Committee declares that compensation is no solution to the problem of the right to work and full employment. Therefore, we instruct the Executive Council to conduct a national campaign against redundancy and unemployment and for the right to work. Furthermore, this National Committee instructs our Executive Council to issue or cause to be issued, through the District Committees suitable propaganda material on the question of the right to work.

That where redundancy is threatened we instruct our Executive Council to warn the employers that this Union will move into action to safeguard the livelihood of our members and we will demand the right to work and that necessary action will be taken to enforce our demands.

This attitude was based largely on the struggles of the engineering workers in the motor trade, who had already had a foretaste of the 'joys' of automation when it is operating in the interests of the employers' profits.

This clear call to the district committees and works committees proved once again that given a positive lead, the workers would respond. In every part of the country, London, the Midlands, Manchester, Sheffield, the North-east coast and Scotland, the engineering workers reaffirmed the principle of the right to work wherever and whenever the employers wanted to lay off workers as redundant. Led by the district committees, shop stewards and works committees, they insisted on the right to full consultation; rather than accept unemployment for some, they fought for the work to be shared—for deployment from section to section, from shop to shop and, in some cases from firm to firm. They demanded stricter control of overtime and if necessary a shorter working week. That this policy in general has been successful is shown by the numbers signing the vacant book; for example, in Sheffield with 23,000 A.E.U. members, the total has not yet exceeded 52. In adopting tactics of this nature, the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions works committees throughout the country, embracing practically all engineering workers, have literally saved tens of thousands of workers in Britain from being flung on the scrap-heap.

The employers have not all been willing to co-operate however, and a series of bitter struggles have broken out over the right to work. In Dundee, on the Clyde, the North-east coast, Manchester, Coventry, Crawley and, as I write, Oldham, strikes have developed over the refusal of the employers to put forward alternative proposals to redundancy. A new feature has been where works com-

mittees have introduced their own shorter working week as an alternative to lay offs.

In face of these overwhelming demonstrations of the will to defend the right to work, it must be said without mincing words that the Confederation leadership is not giving the support needed in this critical period. The composite resolution on Redundancy passed at the 1958 Annual Conference was supposed to be a marriage of the two attitudes of the Transport and General Workers Union and the Amalgamated Engineering Union, but it can only be described as a pale reflection of the forthright and militant sentiments of the A.E.U. National Committee.

The resolution is as follows:

This Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions affirms its belief in the maintenance of full employment and is resolved to do all in its power to see that its members are provided with security of employment. We believe that full employment can only be achieved and maintained by the return of a Labour Government and we urge all our members to make every effort to attain that objective.

In present circumstances we pledge ourselves to do all possible to secure retention in employment of all our members. If in spite of all efforts, some redundancy is unavoidable this Annual meeting urges the Executive Council, District Committees, shop stewards and members to take every practical step to make the best possible arrangements and ensure that the minimum of hardship is experienced by our members.

The resolution is no clarion call to action. And it is not improved when one notes the sentiments of the mover, Mr. L. R. Kealey of the T.G.W.U., who gave this 'stirring' call to the engineers.

Some short-time working was acceptable by most people rather than that some people should be displaced, but after a while those who felt themselves safe should redundancy take place began to have doubts and thoughts about sharing the misery. Officials who at the time of the B.M.C. dispute had the job of explaining why members should strike to help their mates, heard these doubts expressed many times. Workers looked upon as good solid militant unionists carried on working and allowed themselves to be called blacklegs.

Leaving aside the travesty of what really happened in the British Motor Corporation dispute, the workers themselves have given the lie to the slander that they are not prepared to uphold those basic slogans of the trade union movement such as 'Each for all and all for each!' and 'United we stand, divided we fall!' The fighting engineers of Platt Bros., Harland and Wolfs and many other factories must be wondering what they have done to deserve such leadership.

The weakness of such arguments is based not only on a complete lack of confidence in the rank and file and the leadership at district

and factory level, but also on a complete inability to see the struggle on the factory floor as of fundamental importance without which the alternative programme of the movement cannot be realised.

In the fight to maintain employment the workers become increasingly aware of the practical alternatives to the policy of the Tories and the employers. Some (not all) of our objectives are given here. The immediate realisation of the 40-hour week, and less in industries such as motors where automation is growing apace; an increase in purchasing power by a further step up in wages; equal pay for equal work; the carrying through of the policy of the Confederation of the nationalisation of broad sections of the engineering and steel industries; a wide programme of building schools, hospitals, houses and roads; a massive reduction in the £1,500,000,000 arms expenditure; an end to all embargoes on foreign trade, particularly with China and the U.S.S.R.; a policy of fraternal economic aid to former colonies and all the new emerging nations in the dying colonial world; the complete and utter defeat of the Tories at the General Election and the return of a Labour Government willing to carry out the above aims.

If we can get this broad perspective understood as the practical alternative to the capitalist concept of 'necessary unemployment', there is no doubt that not only the engineers, but the majority of the working class, including professional people, will sweep aside Toryism and prepare the way for a modern scientific economy based on a Socialist society.

In the big battles that lie ahead the fate of this country may be decided for the next decade. The workers want to see their top leaders with them in the struggles as they boil up in the districts. They are not looking back (like the fashionable young man). They are looking round for a lead, and woe betide any leaders who in this new period in history try to lead them astray.

THE TORY COLD HEART

'The Captain does everything in his power to assist me, and we get on very well, but I thank my better fortune he has not made me a renegade to Whig principles. I would not be a Tory, if it was merely on account of their cold hearts about that scandal to Christian nations—Slavery.'

(Life of Charles Darwin, Edited by Francis Darwin, 1902.)

HUNGARY

1919 MARCH 23



The Red Soldier is the defender of the Proletarian State, the absconder is her betrayer.

*'Since Man looks at the sky
Red Star is his hope.'* — Ady.

(20th Century Hungarian progressive poet).

Forty years ago: the Hungarian Soviet Republic

FORTY years ago this month, on March 23, 1919, the Hungarian people set up the Hungarian Soviet Republic, out of the defeat and wreckage of the Hapsburgs' Austro-Hungarian Empire. At once the Allied Powers used the weapon of economic blockade against it, accentuating the famine and misery of the aftermath of war. Within three weeks Lord Robert Cecil was telling the House of Commons:

But for the sudden disturbance it would have been, I think, removed from the blockade. Those who control these things thought rightly that till you were assured that there was going to be a stable Government in Hungary, it was no use removing the blockade from that country.

(April 16, 1919.)

To ensure that there would be no 'stable Government', the next step of 'those who control' these things was to unleash Rumanian armies to invade Hungary. The young Soviet Government responded by putting in hand far-reaching reforms, including measures of socialisation. The Hungarian people rallied to their new-formed Red Army, eager to defend their Republic, whilst reactionary elements, absconding with what possessions they could, sneaked over the borders until times should change in favour of counter-revolution. On the opposite page is a typical poster of the time, showing workers with guns in their hands hurrying to join the army of defence.

The invaders pressed on. Intrigues by British representatives masquerading as peace mediators, brought a Social-Democratic government to power on August 1, 1919, to negotiate with the invading armies. Ignoring the negotiated armistice terms, these swept on to occupy Budapest, to pillage food and livestock. By August 23, the Social Democratic Government had made way for the White Terror. A month after the Allied Powers had recognised the Horthy Government, Lenin wrote:

The wavering, vacillation and irresoluteness of the reformists are inevitable; for such people, even though many of them are quite honest, have always, in all countries, wrecked the cause of revolution by their wavering. Such people wrecked the revolution (the first revolution, for there will be another) in Hungary, and they would have wrecked the revolution in Russia had they not been removed from all responsible posts and surrounded by a wall of proletarian distrust, vigilance and surveillance.

(*False Speeches About Freedom*, December 11, 1920.)

The White Terror was recognised by the Allied Powers as a suitably 'stable Government'. On June 20, 1920, fifteen months after the first Hungarian Soviet Republic had been formed, a British Labour delegation reported of the Horthy Government that its acts 'were of so rigorous a character as to merit the name of Terror'. Eighteen months later, on December 22, 1921, the Hungarian Social Democrats had signed a shameful agreement with this same Terror.

The first Hungarian Soviet Republic, established by the people themselves through their own efforts, unaided by foreign liberating armies, had been betrayed and drowned in blood. The Hungarian people had to wait for nearly a quarter of a century for their second chance.

LABOUR MONTHLY

TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AGO

THE AUSTRIAN RISING

Civil War in Austria! For five days the workers of Vienna have repeated once again for all the world to realise the heroism of a class which has nothing to lose but its chains, but a world to win. From the days of the Commune of Paris in 1871 the boundless energy, resource, courage and determination of the working class in the face of however great the odds has been shown time and time again. . . . While the civil war has ended in a temporary defeat of the Austrian workers, nevertheless, its total results in the character of the resistance put up is of overwhelming significance and rich in example for the working class of the whole world.

(from 'The General Strike and Uprising in Austria,'

by H. Rathbone, March, 1934.)

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WAR OVER BERLIN?

Ivor Montagu

WILL we be alive in June? People do not seem to take the danger seriously. But the statements and the attitudes of the Western statesmen and their generals proclaim action, in the event of a contingency they are calmly waiting for, that can only result in general war. Perhaps the fact that so many have begun to think them slightly futile and ridiculous, so few regard their poses and their postures as meaningful, is what makes the danger serious.

Can they really be so stupid as they sound?

The Soviet Union has said one hundred and one times that serious peaceful negotiations about Germany are overdue. Dulles and Co. have said No one hundred and two times. To make a start and show it is not responsible for deadlock, the Soviet Union simply stated that in six months (expiring end of next May) it will renounce its position in Berlin, withdraw its troops and hand over its rights to the G.D.R. (the East German State).

Dulles and Lloyd have screamed blue murder and fallen over themselves chattering about 'defence against aggression', 'ultimatums' and 'maintaining their position in Berlin, if necessary by force'. The generals are already discussing 'air lifts' and 'breaking through with tanks'. What on earth is all this about? Who is supposed to be taken in?

The Soviet Union is going to withdraw its troops, and implement the sovereignty over their territory of the inhabitants of the parts of Germany it occupied by agreement with its Allies at the end of the Great War. What on earth has withdrawal got to do with aggression? And who will stop it withdrawing? No one. And who will regret such a withdrawal or regard it as bellicose? Certainly no one not bereft of his wits by the Cold War.

All right, then, this will have certain consequences. One obvious consequence is that either the British, Americans, French will also withdraw, or they will stay in Berlin alone. The Soviet Union has not told them to go. For all the nattering and chattering there has been no ultimatum, nor anything even remotely resembling a request to leave. The Soviet Union has said: 'We are going, why do you want to stay? You profess to stay out of love of West Berliners, to ensure they shall not be engulfed by the majority in G.D.R. but free to live as they will. Very well, why not see if there is not another way to guarantee them this freedom? Why not make West

Berlin a Free City, guaranteed not by the presence of your troops but by the whole United Nations, with a United Nations presence there? If you don't like this, suggest something else. Let's talk about it. There is no ultimatum, no time limit. Start talking any reasonable time, go on talking any reasonable time. The time limit is only for us. We're going. In six months. We are only concerned to save complications when we are gone.'

But Dulles, Lloyd, Adenauer, de Gaulle, fortified by Gaitskell, refuse even to consider the possibility of such a solution. Their generals puff out their chests, beat their tummies, cheerfully welcome all the complications. What complications can there be save of their own making? All right. Suppose the NATO characters do not go. Suppose they stay. They will want to eat, drink and be merry. They will want to send supplies to and fro across the territory of the G.D.R. (thenceforward sovereign, so treated by U.S.S.R., just as they themselves unilaterally chose to treat Adenauer as sovereign). It will be normal to make the necessary technical arrangements with the administration of the territory in question. Will there be any difficulty in doing so? None whatever, that is not of their own invention. Ulbricht, speaking for the G.D.R. authorities, has said there need be no question of making political capital out of the technical arrangements. Even if Lloyd and others prefer to ape the clownish Dulles habit of standing in front of the hippopotamus and declaring 'there's no sich animule', or the Bishop Berkeley trick of stubbing their foot against the wall and affirming 'Matter is not real', they are welcome to. G.D.R. will extort no diplomatic blackmail. Nothing is called for that the intransigent Adenauer himself does not permit a thousand times a day for internal traffic. Yet instead of sitting down to talk it over and work it out, the stupid bunch sits churning out warnings, putting on acts of 'unifying plans to meet all contingencies' to a running commentary of top-brass bands talking of 'fighting their way through'.

If they do thus attempt to fight, it will, of course, be war. If they attack Eastern Germany, the U.S.S.R. will defend Eastern Germany. There is such a thing as the Warsaw Pact. And what will the war be for? To supply their troops in Berlin? Not at all, this can be done at the cost of showing a few papers. To keep West Berlin 'free'? Not at all, this can be done, and secured by U.N. guarantees, along the lines of the Soviet proposals if they wish, along other lines if they have alternative proposals, or even—if they don't mind the embarrassment—by staying in Berlin on their

own so long as they behave like civilised beings. If there is war—if the world is plunged to destruction—it will not be as a result of Soviet ‘aggression’, because there will be none, it will be because Dulles, Adenauer, Lloyd and de Gaulle prefer to try to take by force what they could equally well secure if polite enough to ask.

When we were boys at school, we used to learn about the War of Jenkins’ Ear. This war, if it happens, will not be War for Berlin, it will be the War for Dulles’ Face. (Only there may be no school-boys left afterwards, to learn its date.)

Absurd, you say, to imagine that anyone could possibly start a war for any such stupidity. But at the moment the Top Western People show not the slightest sign of doing anything else. Two months (out of the six) have elapsed without them even starting conversations. Adenauer and de Gaulle are reported to insist that, if any conversations do start, it must on no account be until *after* the six months have elapsed. And in the meantime is the 64,000 dollar question: What are you doing about it?

Humphreys talks about negotiations. Macmillan is to pay a visit of reconnaissance. But what on earth are these but acts, to put on a mien of reasonableness for domestic electoral considerations? Humphreys and Macmillan talk about ‘finding out what the Soviet Union really wants’. If Humphreys does not know after talking to Khrushchov for six hours, or Macmillan the week after Khrushchov’s speeches at the 21st Congress have been printed in intelligible English, there is not much to be expected from either.

It is plain enough what the Soviet Union wants. It wants that Germany should not be armed with nuclear weapons, led by revanchists and bound by military alliance to NATO. And this happens to be what every intelligent person in Britain, France, West Germany and East Germany wants too. Because it is in the interest not just of the Soviet Union, but of every Briton, every German, every Frenchman, every other European, yes and every Asian and African and even American, also. And it is about time all of us began saying so, too, including the leader of the Labour Party, and showing up the Dulles-NATO line for what it is.

For the Dulles-NATO-Adenauer policy is exactly, spit and image, the Hitler-Bonnet-Chamberlain policy. What was this policy? Acquiescence in German rearmament, encouragement of German irredentism and expansion towards the East. Acquiescence in virtual German economic domination of Europe. Green light to militarism, in return only for the promise to fight an imaginary Russian threat. That, not appeasement (which was only the brand

slogan on the package), was the meaning of Munich. It is the meaning of the NATO 'stand for Berlin' today. It is not in the least surprising to see Macmillan and the Tories pursuing this policy: it was they who armed, befriended, aided Hitler all through the 'thirties (thus almost destroying their country, which only the Soviet alliance they boycotted Churchill for advocating, saved). It is not surprising that this Dulles policy is still pursued: was not his law firm content to serve as Hitler's official representatives in America until the very outbreak of war (so that Roosevelt would not allow him to set foot in the White House)? It is only an historical irony to see where de Gaulle's anti-Communism has brought him, to follow meekly in the footsteps of Laval and Pétain. They are all of them trying to reconstruct the 'New Europe' dominated militarily and economically by Germany that Hitler founded but died, thank God, before he could set up securely. The U.S.S.R. in searching for a German solution that prevents this folly is fighting as much in the interests of all of us as in the days of Stalingrad.

What hypocrisy they talk, all of them, up and down from Eisenhower, to justify the policy they cherish from the 1930s, and now hope to establish where their predecessors failed. (The anti-fascist war with its tens of millions of victims was to them only an incident, an unfortunate interruption. Now they propose to resume the dance with their original partners, whose names they pencilled in at Munich-time.) They do not want a united Germany for Germany's sake, they want only a German military ally. Eisenhower says: 'You could not maintain a virile nation like Germany in neutrality'. But not even that is the point. How could Germany be allied with Britain, U.S.A. and France if, loyal to war-time agreements, they refused to be allied with her? These are mere whirling excuses to maintain what Britain, U.S.A. and France could easily prevent: nuclear weapons under Strauss and Speidel, the reconquest of the East preached in press and schools, the maintenance within Berlin of a ring of spying and sabotage, the return to Krupp and his cronies of the estates and factories of East Germany, a programme that can be realised only by war and that, with war becoming increasingly distasteful to mankind, becomes every day more bankrupt and more discreditable to the Western statesmen in the eyes of their own peoples as well as every other. Yet they don't want to change. They don't want to admit that the Cold War they began, they cannot win. Yet they must. We will let them down lightly. 'Consider you have won', says Khrushchov, only change. And before you do any more damage.

THE TWENTY-FIRST CONGRESS

Andrew Rothstein

THE Soviet Union has entered upon a new period of its development—the period of the comprehensive building of Communist society. . . . The Soviet Union, which blazed the trail to Socialism for mankind, has now reached a level of productive forces, Socialist production relations and cultural advance which enables it, in the next seven years, to develop on a broad front the building of a Communist society.’

In the January *Labour Monthly* some essential facts and figures were given to show the solid grounds on which these historic assertions were made in the resolution adopted on February 5 by the 21st Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, on the report by N. S. Khrushchov. But it would be wrong to treat the proceedings and decisions of the Congress as an internal Soviet affair. They are already playing, and as time goes on will play still more, a most important part in world politics and economics. First, they bring up to date, with immeasurable new force, the proof that the working class in power can build a new and lasting Socialist society and that, once built, the latter can move forward with great strides towards Communist society.

Forty-one years ago, after the November Revolution, the advanced Socialist movement in Britain understood this. While the *Labour Leader*, organ of the then popular Independent Labour Party, could only see (November 15, 1917) that ‘for a time the Extremists have captured the Government’, the *Workers’ Dreadnought* (November 17, 1917) called it ‘a Socialist Revolution’. The *Socialist*, the Socialist Labour Party’s monthly, proclaimed (December, 1917) that ‘the workers of Russia have taken control of affairs’ and that ‘the November Revolution constitutes a landmark in working class history’ (January, 1918). This international importance of the revolution was particularly stressed by the *Call*, the organ of the British Socialist Party. It wrote: ‘The dictatorship of the proletariat is initiating measures, with courage and intelligence, which usher in the long-yearned-for Socialist order of society’ (December 20, 1917). It said that ‘the Russian workers are the forerunners of the advancing hosts, uprisen to rebuild society on the base of common labour’ (January 10, 1918). The extraordinary achievements recorded at the 21st Congress well recall the profound optimism of these predecessors of the Communist Party in

Great Britain. Especially the ever-increasing speed of advance, in the intellectual sphere no less than in the material, have utterly exploded the frequent croaking of capitalist dismal Jimmies. *Both* these lines of Socialist progress are reflected in the first artificial earth satellites of 1957 and the first artificial planet of 1959, in which legitimate pride was expressed at the Congress.

Seventy million citizens who came to discussions on the Seven Year Plan before the Congress, over 4½ million who spoke at these meetings, 600,000 who wrote letters of criticism and suggestion to the press, radio and Party reflected the immense interest and enthusiasm which the whole population of a Socialist community feels in helping to solve the problems of progress to its higher stage—Communist society. And one is reminded again of William Morris, writing in his *True and False Society*, seventy years ago, about Socialism and Communism:

To my mind the latter is simply the necessary development of the former, which implies a transition period, during which people would be getting rid of the habits of mind bred by the long ages of tyranny and commercial competition, *and be learning that it is to the interest of each that all should thrive.*

One of the most instructive and inspiring sections of Khrushchov's report to the Congress dealt with precisely this transition period, 'one in which all the material and spiritual conditions for Communism are being created'—and which has already begun.

Secondly, the production increase planned—raising agricultural output per head above the level in the U.S.A. today, and industrial output close to that level in most cases and above it in some—is to bring the U.S.S.R., the first Socialist State in history, the possibility of providing its citizens with the highest standard of living in the world between 1965 and 1970, fifty years after the Revolution.

What strikes an individual visitor to the Soviet Union today—and the writer had that privilege at the beginning of 1959—is the degree to which the ground had been prepared for this even before the Seven Year Plan got under way. For example: Waiting two or three minutes, no more, in January, whether on the outskirts of Moscow or in the centre, for number 5 trolleybus, and whether at peak time or at 10.30 to 11.30 p.m.—compared with waiting 25 minutes for the 615 trolleybus, no less in demand, at peak time a week later, at a City Road stop. Hearing in the Auto-Tractor Electrical Equipment Works, Moscow (which I knew well in 1930-31) about the 200 school-leavers at 17 whom they took on and began to train last year, among the 2,500,000 new wage-earners

who began earning their living in the U.S.S.R.—and coming back to hear of hundreds of young people going straight from school to the dole queue in Plymouth, Glasgow and London. Seeing the splendid new home for lonely old age pensioners built last year at the Balashiha Spinning Mill, near Moscow (with four meals a day, neat spotless bedrooms and sitting room, clean linen weekly, heating, radio and newspapers provided, nine on the staff to look after 25 old women workers), with other pensioners at the same factory now (since 1957) drawing from 50 per cent to 100 per cent of their previous full earnings—and coming back to find once more the desperate plight of many hundreds of thousands of old age pensioners which the Labour movement knows so well. Seeing on December 22 the great new city laid out, with broad floodlit avenues of four- and five-storey houses and dozens of modern shops, along the approach to Moscow from the airport (all brand-new since my last visit in April, 1956), part of the capital's 100,000 new apartments and of the country's 2½ million built in towns in the last two years—and then coming back to St. Pancras, with its terrible housing shortage (not of course unique among our boroughs) in no way relieved by the rent increases over which the local Labour Party and Labour Council group have been split by their national leaders, and with the shameful, revolting story in the newspapers of Croydon's Tory majority imposing a means test for council houses.

After seeing textile workers in their canteen eating meals which would stagger even a London docker or Yorkshire miner; and finding the Moscow women workers going home on the Metro dressed with a style and variety which I had never seen in 17 previous visits since 1920; and reading of the 1,100 new schools built in the U.S.S.R. in 1958 alone; and meeting factory workers who by scores are taking their technical B.Sc. in after-work courses at their factory club, under direction from visiting university lecturers; and having the fascinating spectacle of the Moscow ward furniture shops being filled with hundreds of pieces of modern light furniture in the mornings and invariably stripped bare by the evening—to come back and hear 'Soviet experts' on the B.B.C. babbling balderdash about the Soviet standard of living being 'less than half' that of the British workers in 1965.

Thirdly, the Seven Year Plan provides the wherewithal for 'an all-round development of the economic co-operation of the Soviet Union with all Socialist countries' and for 'further inter-State specialisation and co-operation in production' between them.

This is of course of exceptional importance for the fate of the world, since it ensures the further strengthening of the Socialist camp of nations, and must give their enemies even more furiously to think before trying to attack them. The capitalist 'experts' are never called upon by their masters to tell the public about *that*—although great progress has already been made. Most of the other Socialist countries have lately, in bilateral negotiations, been expanding their trade and technical agreements with the U.S.S.R. and with each other, for the years 1959-65. Each of them is thereby speeding up its building of a fully Socialist economy, at the pace which suits it. Poland is developing several new branches of transport engineering, Hungary mining equipment, China railway and metallurgical technique, and so forth. Poland and the German Democratic Republic are to build a great canal together: the G.D.R. and Czechoslovakia are jointly building a power station for China: Czechoslovakia, Rumania, Poland and the G.D.R. are building a big cellulose plant at Braila (Rumania): an oil pipeline is to be built from the U.S.S.R. to Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary and the G.D.R.—these are but a few out of scores of similar projects. Over 12,000 students and 2,000 post-graduates from the other Socialist countries are working in the U.S.S.R., and tens of thousands of their workers and technicians have been trained in its modern plants.

No less important has been the co-ordination of the Socialist countries' plans by the Council for Mutual Economic Aid at its regular conferences. Without in the least stopping its advance in its own way towards a highly developed and balanced Socialist economy, each is concentrating (for example) on those branches of the chemical industry, heavy engineering, shipbuilding, textiles, mining and metallurgy for which its conditions best suit it, and arranging its exports and imports accordingly.

The result—and Khrushchov underlined this—has been increasingly to eliminate a feature of international relations characteristic of the old capitalist world, namely, unequal rates of development (about which Lenin wrote in his book *Imperialism*). Each is rapidly progressing by its own road to the point at which it will come abreast of the U.S.S.R.—and then the move forward to Communist society (thanks above all to Soviet help for the creative effort of their peoples) will be common to the *whole* Socialist camp, the first 'advancing hosts' of whom the Russian workers were 'fore-runners'.

What a contrast with the capitalist camp, with the growing friction between the six Powers of the Common Market and the eleven, led by Britain, who would have made up the abortive Free Trade Zone! What a contrast with the increasingly bitter struggle for markets in which British exporters are combatting those of West Germany and Japan, Italy and India—not to speak of the shady methods of the United States monopolists in ‘fixing’ contracts against the United Kingdom! What a contrast with the exploitation of the undeveloped one-product countries, through the falling prices of their raw material exports, by the countries of monopoly capitalism—an exploitation now rebounding, by reducing the purchasing power of dependent countries, on the monopolists’ exports!

Fourthly, the huge increases of output provided during the Seven Year Plan must provide big export surpluses, notably of raw materials and foodstuffs, while the requirements of rising living standards open up afresh the prospects of very large Soviet import orders—for those who want them. Ay, there’s the rub—for those who want them. The 620,000 registered unemployed in Britain at the beginning of 1959, and the 300,000 or more unregistered, as well as many thousands on short time—can have the satisfaction of knowing that their Tory Government doesn’t want the orders. The Tories have refused to throw over the restrictions on British-Soviet trade. They refused in 1952, in 1954 and in 1956 to sign a trade agreement free from such restrictions.

Have these methods hampered the economic progress or even the military strengthening of the U.S.S.R.? Let the cosmic rockets, the fruit of a highly-developed large-scale industry, reply—or the hundreds of ultra-modern high-grade machine-tools and heavy presses which the U.S.S.R. is now exporting—or the dozens of giant tower cranes which one sees at work round Soviet cities, putting up houses. Let the Balashiha mill reply, where I saw in the shops the machinery of Oldham, Accrington and Manchester ranged down one side, belt-driven and fifty years old, while up-to-date machines from the new Penza, Tashkent or other works, each driven by its own electric motor, ran down the other, soon to replace their antiquated rivals.

A typical consequence of the idiotic Tory ‘strategy’ in trade relations with the U.S.S.R. has been that between 1957 and 1958 British exports to that country fell from £37 millions to £23 millions, while West Germany’s went up from £16 millions to £21 millions and France’s from £8 millions to £28 millions (*Daily Express*, Febru-

ary 13). Why? Because the latter countries have the trade agreements which the Tory imbeciles (and those of Transport House before them, let's not forget) were too clever to sign—and which Britain's competitors renew, on an enlarged basis, as I write.

Yet, just as in 1919 when its redrafted post-revolutionary programme declared that the Party's aim is 'to extend economic collaboration and political connections with other peoples', so in 1959 at its Congress the Communist Party of the Soviet Union has stated that 'the U.S.S.R. can, and is prepared to, develop economic connections and trade with all countries'. Fifthly, the Seven Year Plan provides a crushing reply—as the old Socialists always prophesied—to the charge that Socialism means the end of the refinements of culture, scientific research and civilised life.

Consider the tremendous fact that at this particular time in world history the producing classes of an entire country (the workers and collective farmers, not some privileged minority) are to reduce their working week to 40 hours with a 7-hour day (6 hours for miners), in 1960, as a preliminary—before the Plan is completed—to introducing the first stages of a general 35-hour and 5-day week (30 hours in heavy and dangerous trades). Moreover, this is to go not with declining wages or purchasing power, but on the contrary. Haven't we always been told by the defenders of the ivory tower that for the finer culture and the flowers of civilisation you need leisure? And now sixty million workers will have such leisure as none before them. What will they make of it—they, for whom increasing mechanisation of complex industrial processes, automation, telemechanics, hold no terrors?

The answer can be found in what they are doing already. In what capitalist factories does one see notices up that tomorrow evening there will be a meeting with players from one of the country's most famous theatres, to hear an act of their new play and discuss it? That is what was up at the door of the tool-room in the Auto-Tractor Electrical Equipment Works on December 27, 1958. In what Lancashire cotton mill will you find just now the library (if there is a library) issuing many hundreds of copies of an invitation to the operatives, every 10 days or so, to 'readers' conferences' to discuss some new novel, often with the author, or to discuss subjects like 'Friendship and Comradeship', or 'What part pensioners can play in public life'? This is what the library of the Balashiha workers' club was doing last year. And in how many clubs at capitalist factories (where there are clubs) does one find

workers studying philosophy and economics, or the *English Historical Review* and the *Economic Journal*, with a dozen journals of similar standing, well-thumbed? Not many, shall we charitably say? But on January 12 these were the studies I found arranged, and that the type of journal on the magazine-rack, at Balashiha.

As for poetry—and not Marxist poetry either, but Shakespeare's sonnets and Robert Burns and Byron—you should look at the back of a copy of Samuel Marshak's superb translations, and note the vast editions in which they have appeared, three hundred thousand for Burns alone. I hope, too, to persuade the veteran writer Kornei Chukovsky to reveal some of the score of letters he gets every day, all the year round, from young people on problems of literature, for the benefit of the asses who talk about the death of culture.

Sixthly, the Plan is itself an immense strengthening of the cause of peace—not only because it strengthens the Soviet Union in the material and moral sense, but also because, in the words of the Congress decision, it is 'a concrete offer of the Soviet Union to compete in peaceful economic pursuits'.

How could it be otherwise? Here is a scheme for increasing farm output by 70 per cent and industrial by 80 per cent in seven years: for building many hundreds of new factories, pits, power-stations, ships and shipyards and laying about 7,000 miles of new railway lines: for building new schools, clubs, colleges, 100 new television stations, 15 million apartments in towns and 7 million houses in the countryside. 'Every family its own apartment', 'every young person to have an 11-year education from 7 to 18/19, combined with productive labour in the last three years', 'the shortest working day and the shortest working week in the world', 'double the pay of low-paid workers and raise real incomes for all workers and collective farmers by 40 per cent'—such are the bellicose and incendiary targets of the Plan for the Soviet individual citizen. If ever a country's preoccupations gave it an overall vested interest in peace, these do. Nor are they accompanied by any flexing of hydrogen-bomb muscles, newspaper maps of rocket-targets, boasts about wiping out other countries, with which the loathsome hypocrites in generals' uniform assail our ears.

Lastly, by its vindication of Marxism-Leninism, the Seven Year Plan is, as the Congress resolution rightly says, 'a staggering blow to bourgeois ideology, to international reformism and revisionism'. For it comes at a time when, after all the boasting of the

post-war years that capitalism in Britain was no longer capitalism and that the class struggle here, at any rate, was dead, 1959 has opened with growing unemployment, bitter struggles over victimisation and 'redundancy', increasing misery among old age pensioners, rising living costs, fallen exports and shorter order-books—and an arrogance among employers unknown for many years, with rising profits and incomes for the top monopolists (those proprietors of the 500 biggest trusts for whom the aid and comfort of the next Labour Government has already been promised).

The new Soviet plan embodies the triumph of the theory and practice of revolutionary Marxism, in the era of the resumed and deepening crisis of the world capitalist system. In that sense it is a call to all who wish to see in Britain, too, the working class beginning 'to rebuild society on the base of common labour' to join the ranks of the Communist Party.

I WAS THERE

Norman Temple

I HAD never been to the Soviet Union. Consequently my visit to Moscow on January 23 as a fraternal delegate to the Extraordinary 21st Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union not only thrilled me, but caused a tremendous stir of friendly interest in the factories and in our town. Only the difficulty in securing leave of absence for the visit seemed out of step with the general friendly feeling. Since I returned home I find this interest has deepened; and already within a week six report-back meetings were requested. Anxious questions are being asked of me on all sides. 'What is it really like, Norman?' 'How does the standard of life compare with ours?' 'What do they eat?' 'What are their clothes like?' 'Are they slaves of a tyrannical rule or really free?' 'Are the workers behind Khrushchov and the Communist Party or is this plan being forced upon them without desire or option on their part?' 'Dare they criticise?' 'Have they an unemployment problem and what is the housing position?' 'What do they think of Britain?'

That these questions and dozens of others should be sincerely asked, after the years of confusing, hysterical anti-Soviet abuse by our 'popular' millionaire press, screen, radio and T.V. is the clearest indication that our people in Britain are not fools but basically honest, peace-loving citizens who want to understand the truth

about their neighbours in other lands and yearn for friendship and an end to cold and hot wars.

I found their counterpart in the Soviet Union, in the factories, amongst farm delegates, technicians and officials. Anyone who has worked in a factory at times of depression and of relatively full employment knows how to recognise the signs of fear, intimidation or uncertainty on a worker's face, in his manner or in the general atmosphere of the 'shop'. Language difficulty cannot blind one in these matters. I found the Soviet worker proud, friendly and happy, pleased to meet the British people and anxious for the deepest, mutual friendly relations. They in their turn asked me many questions about British workers.

Going around a large automobile works, we were accompanied by the Director, Works Convenor and Communist Party Secretary, whilst a photographer for the works' newspaper was dancing hither and thither taking snapshots. He had just found a satisfactory position some ten yards in front of us and was preparing to spring the trigger. What manner of 'slave' was the 20-years-old fitter who, bubbling with exuberance, dropped his tools beside the path, took up a position in front of the camera, comically preened himself and touched up his hair and non-existent bow-tie, before darting off as quickly as he had come?

These workers proposed 400 new inventions last year, which are now in operation. In each department, 'work-teams' compete for greater efficiency and output and provide their own 'challenge shields'. Of the total staff of 50,000, 16 per cent are technical and management. There are also over 400 doctors and nurses to staff the many medical rooms scattered throughout the factory. A very wide range of sporting and cultural amenities, a huge library and technical training establishments were features of importance. No young worker can work in the factory before 18 years of age. Preliminary schooling and technical training takes place up to this age. 98 per cent of all the workers are trade union members. The daily output includes 400 lorries and trucks and 14-15 buses of more than one type, 1,500 cycles and 300-310 refrigerators. They have vacancies for 9,000 more workers, but cannot fill them as there is no unemployment in the Soviet Union.

Their contribution to the Seven Year Plan will be to increase total output by 70 per cent, concentrating only on trucks and lorries. 40 per cent of all machine tools as against the present 5 per cent will be completely automatic. Some 40 kilometres of new conveyer lines between machines and between 'shops' will be built.

In doing all this not a single worker will be put out of the factory. Operating progressively from 1960, the lower paid workers will have their wages doubled plus a 40 per cent increase of wages in common with all workers. By 1965 the maximum hours in the factory will be 35 per week with 30 hours maximum for those on hazardous work. Their standard of living, which on balance is at least as high as that of British workers, will become the highest in the world. They will find 65 per cent more consumer goods in the shops and at cheaper prices. Every family will have a separate home with rents no more than at present, namely 3 to 5 per cent of an average income.

Is it any wonder that at the 21st Congress I saw the reflection of the people of the whole of the Soviet Union, farm and factory workers alike, jubilantly yet seriously acclaiming the Seven Year Plan, which has been so thoroughly discussed in every corner of their country and putting the final seal to this great venture.

This is why the Soviet Union puts up such a struggle for world peace. The 21st Congress and the Seven Year Plan will have a resounding impact on the world at large. It will enormously strengthen the material and moral appeal of Socialism to workers everywhere, not least of all in Britain. It will place Socialism within the world as the major system of society.

OWEN'S COMMUNISM

The newly-created gigantic productive forces, hitherto used only to enrich individuals and to enslave the masses, offered to Owen the foundations for a reconstruction of society; they were destined, as the common property of all, to be worked for the common good of all.

Owen's communism was based upon this purely business foundation, the outcome, so to say, of commercial calculation. Throughout, it maintained this practical character. Thus, in 1823, Owen proposed the relief of the distress in Ireland by communist colonies, and drew up complete estimates of costs of founding them, yearly expenditure, and probable revenue. And in his definite plan for the future, the technical working out of details is managed with such practical knowledge (ground-plan, front and side and bird's-eye views all included) that the Owen method of social reform once accepted, there is from the practical point of view little to be said against the actual arrangement of details.

Anti-Dühring, by F. Engels, page 363.

A Flaw In Our Character

As you read through Labour Monthly, you probably think to yourself what a power of good it would do if only a lot more people could see it. If all the ones who are misled by the Express, titillated by the Mirror, puzzled by the Herald, dismayed by the New Statesman and confused by Tribune, could read clear accounts of what really happens and what it means. Then they would understand who the real enemies are; who is causing the mischief in the world; and understand the causes of unemployment and how a change can be made.

What a difference it would make if many more Labour Party members and militant trade unionists had Labour Monthly's invaluable assistance as guide, help and informant; a powerful reinforcement for those eager to defend Socialist ideas against the attacks of the Right-wing.

Our readers tell us how good Labour Monthly is, but it has a serious flaw in its character. It will not walk around and put itself into the hands of all the men and women who ought to read it and need to read it. For that we need dozens of L.M. enthusiasts from one end of the country to the other who will make it their job to see that done.

It seems to us that the best way to campaign for increased sales is in connection with particular articles. We did this in February with 'Shop Stewards Today' and so got extra sales to engineering workers.

(1) Can you undertake to approach, say, six miners, or builders, or cotton workers, etc., when we carry something of special interest to them; or perhaps tackle several active ward Labour Party workers, or the officials in a couple of Co-op. guilds? We could let you have advance information and supply you, if need be, with copies on credit for a special effort.

(2) Can you make a start with this number? For example by approaching six people who would have a special interest in what George Matthews, John Wood and Herbert Howarth have to say on the fight against unemployment.

(3) Can you help sell L.M. at events in your area? We badly need a list of people we could call on to do this.

(4) Will you make a special donation for the campaign or become a regular guarantor?

(5) Will you suggest to us organisations to whom we could write, telling them about L.M. and asking for orders? We must watch what we spend, so the suggestions should be ones where there is well-founded hope of success.

Send to Angela Tuckett, Labour Monthly, 134, Ballards Lane, London, N.3.

I can help in the following ways :

Name..... Address.....

BOOKS

A Painter of Our Time

John Berger

Secker & Warburg 18s. 238pp.

JOHN BERGER'S novel was the subject, when it appeared a couple of months back, of a hostile and malicious review in *The Observer* by Stephen Spender, sometime author of *Forward from Liberalism*, who did not scruple to compare Berger with Goebbels and damned his book as carrying the whiff of the concentration camp. The whiff of the concentration camp is there all right. In what serious novel of the Europe of our time could it be absent? But, looking back to Spender's review after reading *A Painter of Our Time*, what strikes one most is not so much the malice as the sheer vulgar, fatuous ineptness. To what depths of insensitivity and moral dishonesty can the path of anti-communism lead a sensitive and high-minded intellectual! I should like to see a copy of Spender's review published as an appendix to future editions of

A Painter of Our Time. It would add its own illumination not only to the events in Hungary in 1956, which are the background of the climax of John Berger's novel, but to its theme; the life-struggle of an honest man to be a good artist and a morally responsible human being.

This novel of Berger's is a splendid achievement, a book of tremendous and compelling interest. I am not much concerned with the question of whether it is entirely successful technically as a novel. John Berger has set himself a curious technical problem in the method he uses to present his story: he is as keen as Defoe to insist that his invention is actually true, using the good old pretence of a discovered journal. John Berger, character in the book as well as novelist, presents to us, with additional notes and comments, the diary of Janos Lavin, Hungarian painter, an exile for over thirty years, first in pre-Nazi Berlin and then in London. The weakness of this form is that it tends to run too much to the episodic and anecdotal; its strength is its directness. Lavin's diary is a working

artist's notebook as much as a personal narrative, and this is important. One of the achievements of the book is to persuade us that Lavin really is a good painter. And because he is a good painter his dilemmas have a relevance and a reality which force their way into the reader's mind.

The great thing about this novel is its moral depth and honesty. Lavin's reactions to the news from Hungary—the difficult achievement of socialism, the trial and execution of his friend Laszlo, and the later revelation of Laszlo's innocence and his rehabilitation—these really *are* the reactions of a deep and honest Communist. And how different are these profound moral grapplings from what has passed in social-democratic and revisionist writings for adequate ethical consideration of the Hungarian tragedy. A comparison of the superficiality of some of the on-the-spot narratives with the depth of Berger's apparently more contemplative presentation of the issues tells us, I think, something about the complex problems of artistic realism and commitment. The valuable realism is that which—whatever the particular method of presentation—penetrates to the historical and human essence of a situation. *A Painter of Our Time* does not achieve a full resolution. Janos Lavin, at the moment of bourgeois success, goes back to Hungary. And he explains his decision in the cryptic phrases; 'Those who are not like I was will choose the same as I did. I go now to tell my mistake to those who are like I was'. Fair enough. No-one would wish for a cheap and easy optimism by way of resolution. And yet somehow at the end one feels that John Berger has done less than justice to his hero, has gibbed at expressing the full heroism in-

herent in the man. I cannot help wondering whether this may not be in some way connected with the unresolved opposition between 'art' on the one side and 'immediate objectives' which winds its way through Lavin's contemplations and is clearly one of Berger's own preoccupations. My own suspicion is that this is in reality a pseudo-conflict or perhaps a problem not quite adequately described as a conflict at all.

I have no space to mention adequately the novel's more obvious merits—the magnificent insights into the London 'art world', the quick, painter's eye for the momentary effect, the success with the studio atmosphere. These are good things, but they could all have been achieved in a lesser book. What one most wishes to salute is the toughness of this uncompromising novel, the absence in it of everything that has caused the recent novel of Miss Iris Murdoch, one of the leading intellectual ornaments of the 'new Left', to be so enthusiastically recommended by the Book Society.

ARNOLD KETTLE.

The Small Farm in the Steppe.

Valentin Katayev.

Lawrence & Wishart. 15s. 286 pp.

THIS delightful novel will be enjoyed by the young in heart, whether their physical age is ten or three score and ten.

Set in Russia just after the 1905 revolution, it tells the story of the teenager Petya, son of a kindly, impractical, idealistic schoolmaster. Petya's immediate circle includes his 'kid brother' Pavlik, annoying as all younger brothers always have been and always will be; Auntie, who manages the household and locks up the strawberry jam from the boys' greedy fingers; Gavrik, the irrespres-

sible young printers' apprentice; Gavrik's sister Motya; and Marina, a mystery girl for whom Petya suffers the pangs of calf-love.

In this small world the echoes of the greater world outside are heard faintly—the loss of a job for 'anti-Government propaganda', the first issue of a new paper called Pravda, two lodgers who turn out to be in hiding from Tsarist officials, and, towards the end, the promise of a glorious future for the Russian people.

Katayev has captured the elusive spirit of youth, the adolescent mind feeling its way towards the great human emotions. His characters and their personal relationships are brought to life with a warm humanity which fairly glows from the pages.

ROSEMARY SMALL.

COMMUNICATION

I OWE the readers of the *Labour Monthly* an explanation for a stupid mistake in my article in the November issue (p. 514). It was the statement that, with reference to Soviet grain, 'the 1960 target-figure of a barn crop of 180 million tons . . . may be fulfilled'. Actually the new target set for 1965 in the new Seven-Year Plan is below this figure,

namely, between 161 and 177 million. In so far as I can plead any excuse, it is that I was wrongly assuming the barn crop in 1955, at the start of the sixth Five-Year Plan, had already reached nearly 130 million. Had it started at this level and risen over the five years at the rate we now know that it has risen over the past five or six years (between 1952 or 3 and 1958), then it would, indeed, have exceeded 180 million by 1960. But as a result of Khrushchov's speech of December 15 to the Central Committee of the C.P.S.U., we now know that the grain figures for the early fifties were grossly exaggerated, since they were based on the so-called 'biological yield' and not on the crop actually gathered into the barns. The revised figures now given show an average crop for 1949-53 as low as 80 million, and even for 1952 (a relatively good year) it was not above 92 million. The 1958 crop, however, has reached 137 million, a quite remarkable rise in five years.

This means incidentally that the figures in the last line of the table on page 326 (4th edition, 1957) of my book, *Soviet Economic Development*, are wrong and need revising—if I may be allowed this opportunity of pointing this out.

MAURICE DOBB.

LITERARY CONVERSAZIONE

'This *No Love for Johnny* seems to be the *Dr. Zhivago* of the Labour Party.'

'Nonsense. You can't put a writer like Fienburgh on a literary level with a Pasternak.'

'True. But then the Labour Party is not on the level of the Russian Revolution.'

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(Continued from page 4 of cover)

Therefore, I say, that is the place for leftwingers, and the sure guarantee of ending retreat.' The third, seizing every chance to build a united left, describes how his 'activities are going full swing. At a recent N.C.C.L. meeting, when the de Gaulle business was discussed, I asked about a united Left to defeat him. The speaker replied: "No! the Socialists fear that later they would be swallowed by the Communists." I put it to him: is that not better than to be "swallowed" by fascists? No reply! L.M. is always in a pocket, or left out in full view on the table, or given to somebody to pass round. There is no doubt in the last six months especially it has clarified events occurring all over the world. I've joined an evening class on international affairs; so maybe it will reach others there.'

This is typical of other Labour Party readers, who speak of it as 'a yeast moulding thought and action'; or 'so helpful in getting our members worked up against these bans and proscriptions used to strangle us Leftwingers'; and again: 'as valuable to me today as when I was introduced to it by that wonderful

teacher and propagandist for Socialism, Willie Paul.' That reminded me that it is just a year ago since the death in Derby of that Scottish militant, once editor of the *Sunday Worker*. Pupil of James Connolly, delegate from the Socialist Labour Party to the Inaugural Conference of the Communist Party in July, 1920, he met Lenin two months later. I saw him last when he made a special journey to London for the unveiling of the Karl Marx memorial in Highgate Cemetery.

Articles about the fight back in this issue should do as useful a job as Bill Warman's *Shop Stewards Today*, which was much in demand in factory committees and trade union branches in the Midlands, Surrey, Lancashire and London particularly. To quote a *Lancashire engineer*: 'At present it's "the quality" people in the movement who read L.M.; now we must get "the quantity" reading and studying the truth. And soon'. On pages 141-2 you will find practical suggestions of how to get down to it. Please don't fail to Study *A Flaw in our Character*. Can the welcome upturn in the January fund be maintained? How good to see new regulars!

£62 1s. 8d.

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